

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6967

USDOC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMCONSUL ZANZIBAR BY POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 2972

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS : EWWT, EAID, EGEN, BEXP, TZ

SUBJECT : DAR ES SALAAM PORT CONGESTION LESSENING

REF: A) USDOC 3296 (NOTAL); B) STATE 257793 (NOTAL); AND
C) DAR ES SALAAM 3704 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DAR ES SALAAM'S CONGENITAL PORT CONGESTION LOOKS TO BE IMPROVING AND PATIENT SHOWS SIGNS OF REVIVING AFTER MONTHS (IF NOT YEARS) OF DECLINE. PORT ACTIVITIES ARE QUICKENING, TONNAGE BURDEN ON PART FACILITIES IS LESSENING AND TANGOV HAS TAKEN STEPS TO IMPROVE PORT MANAGEMENT. CONSEQUENTLY, WE REQUEST ACTION ADDRESSEES TO CONSULT WITH US LINES SERVING EAST AFRICA AND ASK THEY RECONSIDER EARLIER DECISIONS TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE SERVICE TO TANZANIA. BELIEVE TWO PL-480 SHIPMENTS TO BE HANDLED BY LYKES LINES PROVIDE EXCELLENT TESTS TO DEMONSTRATE CONGESTION IN DAR PORT DEFINITELY DECLINING. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOR FIRST TIME IN FIFTEEN MONTHS (ONE DUTCH SHIPPING REP GOES SO FAR AS TO STATE PERIOD IS "MORE LIKE 4 OR 5 YEARS") DAR ES SALAAM CONGESTION APPEARS TO BE LESSENING, AND WE MAY NOW BE ON THRESHOLD OF PERIOD OF STEADY IMPROVEMENT. FIRST OF ALL, BERTHING DELAYS HAVE BEEN NOTABLY REDUCED IN RECENT WEEKS UNTIL TODAY OUT OF 8 BERTHS 4 WERE OPEN TO ARRIVING SHIPS WITH NO DELAYS. OF THE OTHER 4 BERTHS, PRESENT OCCUPANTS WERE OBLIGED TO WAIT 1, 2, 6, AND 11 DAYS (11-DAY WAIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FOR BERTHING OF SHIP CARRYING CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TAZARA-CONSIGNEE CARGO), AND THERE ARE NO REPORTED BERTHING DELAYS FOR SHIPS WISHING TO DISCHARGE IN STREAM (WHERE, ADMITTEDLY, DISCHARGE RATE IS AROUND 40 PERCENT SLOWER THAN "ALONG SIDE"). ONCE ALONG SIDE, SHIP MASTERS REPORT THAT THEY ARE DISCHARGING AND LOADING FASTER THAN BEFORE. ONE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT FORKLIFTS AND PALLETS, WHILE NOT PLENTIFUL, ARE IN SUFFICIENT NUMBER TO SPEED UP UNLOADING. ANOTHER IS THAT TWO NEW SHEDS ARE IN SERVICE THEREBY PERMITTING BETTER ORGANIZATION OF CARGO. OTHER SHEDS ARE BEING SYSTEMATICALLY CLEARED AND TONS OF OLDER UNIDENTIFIED CARGO IS BEING REMOVED FOR STORAGE ON NEARBY FAIR GROUND S.

3. MOST IMPORTANT EXPLANATION FOR LESSENING OF CONGESTION IS OVERALL DECLINE IN IMPORT TONNAGE. UNFORTUNATELY, RECENT HARBOR STATISTICS TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS GENERAL IMPRESSION HELD BY THOSE SHIPPING LINE REPRESENTATIVES WITH WHOM WE TALK ARE NOT AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, FIGURES FOR ONE IMPORTANT FACET OF PROBLEM ARE AVAILABLE -- STATUS OF ZAMBIAN SHIPMENTS. AS OF DEC. 3 THERE WERE 5,718 TONS OF ZAMBIAN CARGO INSIDE PORT AREA AND 8,122 WAITING IN MARSHALLING YARD (UBUNGO) ON EDGE OF CITY. THIS IS THE LOWEST LEVEL OF ZAMBIAN CARGO WAITING ONWARD SHIPMENT IN OVER YEAR. MORE SIGNIFICANT IS LEVEL OF ZAMBIAN THROUGHPUT TONNAGE MEASURED BY TAKING AGGREGATE OF ZAMBIAN CARGOS (1) IN PORT AWAITING ONWARD SHIPMENT, (2) BEING DISCHARGED, AND (3) SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE. ON SEPTEMBER 20 THIS FIGURE WAS REGISTERED AT 49,000 TONS. BY NOVEMBER 20 IT HAD DECLINED TO 19,000 TONS. ACTING PORT MANAGER CHOLOBI OBSERVES THIS FIGURE MAY HAVE REACHED NADIR AS IT NOW APPEARS THAT CONGESTION IN OTHER AFRICAN PORTS MAY CAUSE ZAMBIAN SHIPMENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THROUGH DAR ES SALAAM TO INCREASE. HOWEVER, CHOLOBI AND OTHER SHIPPING REPRESENTATIVES BELIEVE ANY INCREASE IN ZAMBIAN CARGOS WILL BE OFFSET BY DECLINES IN TANZANIAN TONNAGES NOW THAT IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ARE CURTAILING TANZANIA'S IMPORTS.

4. OF MORE SIGNIFICANCE IS THE RECOGNIZED FACT THAT CARGO IS STARTING TO MOVE MORE EFFECTIVELY THROUGH PORT AREA. ON NOVEMBER 18 TANGOV ASKED EAST AFRICAN HARBOURS CORP. TO FIRE

THREE SENIOR MANAGERS IN PORT OF DAR ES SALAAM, INCLUDING PORT MANAGER (WHO HAS ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED MORE SKILL AT REFERREING INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MATCHES THAN MANAGING HARBOR). THIS PLACES IN CHARGE DEPUTY MANAGER CHOLOBI -- LONG RECOGNIZED AS THE HARDEST WORKING AND MOST ABLE EXECUTIVE IN DAR PORT. SACKINGS AT SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVEL ARE HAVING SALUTARY EFFECT ON ALL LEVELS PORT MANAGEMENT. (ONE SHIPPING LINE REP COMMENTS "THEY ARE ALL SCARED OF LOSING THEIR JOBS."). CONSEQUENTLY, SHIPPING REPS NOW FIND PORT PERSONNEL SIGNIFICANTLY MORE WILLING AND EAGER TO SERVE.

5. WILLINGNESS OF TANGOV TO TAKE IMMEDIATE AND HARSH MEASURES IS VISIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS WIDESPREAD CONCERN OVER GENERAL PORT CONDITIONS AND OPERATIONS THAT HAS REACHED MINISTERIAL LEVEL. PRIMARY INCENTIVE TO FUEL INTEREST IN PORT CONGESTION PROBLEM IS DESIRE TO REDUCE 25-30 PERCENT SURCHARGE IMPOSED BY MOST CONFERENCE SHIPPING LINES. ALREADY SHIPPING LINES ARE HEARING MUTED APPEALS TO LOWER CONFERENCE SURCHARGES.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE REQUEST ACTION ADDRESSEES MAKE COORDINATED APPROACH TO ALL AMERICAN CONFERENCE LINES SERVING EAST AFRICAN AND ASK THEY RECONSIDER EARLIER DECISION TO SUSPEND DAR ES SALAAM SERVICE (SEE REF A). LYKES LINE UNDOUBTEDLY EASIEST TO APPROACH THIS REGARD AS REF B ANNOUNCES GULF MERCHANT SCHEDULED TO SAIL DAR ES SALAAM DECEMBER 13 AND CHARLOTTE LYKES ON DECEMBER 19. BOTH SHIPS SCHEDULED TO CARRY PL-480 GRAIN FOR TANZANIA AND, AS NOTED REF C, THEY WILL BE GIVEN IMMEDIATE

BERTHING. SITUATION ONLY CLOUDED BY MASTER (CONTI) OF CHARLOTTE LYKES WHO TOLD EMBOFF HE PREPARING REPORT ON CONDITIONS IN TANZA WHICH MAY CAUSE HIS EMPLOYERS TO JUDGE PORT CONDITIONS IN TANZANIA SUCH THAT LINE SHOULD SUSPEND SERVICE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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ENTIRELY. CONTI, WITH WHOM WE TALKED ON EARLIER VOYAGE,
IS ABLE AND FAIR JUDGE OF SITUATION. HE MAKES POINT THAT
TANGA IS HAVING MANY OF SAME PROBLEMS AS PORT DAR ES SALAAM.
WHILE HIS REPORT JUDGED ACCURATE, IT CANNOT BE EXTENDED TO
COVER DAR ES SALAAM AT THIS TIME SINCE CHARLOTTE LYKES
ONLY LOADED COFFEE IN DAR AND THAT, WE UNDERSTAND, WENT
SMOOTHLY. MORE IMPORTANT, EMBOFF DISCUSSED ARRIVAL OF
GULF MERCHANT AND CHARLOTTE LYKES WITH CHOLOBI AND PORT MANAGER
SEES NO REASON WHY THESE VESSELS CANNOT DISCHARGE GENERAL
CARGO WHILE PL-480 GRAIN BEING OFF-LOADED. THEREFORE, PLEASE
REQUEST LYKES TO ADVISE SHIPPERS THAT LYKES NOW WILLING TO ACCEPT
GENERAL CARGO FOR DAR ES SALAAM. HOPEFULLY, TWO LYKES SHIPS
WILL DEMONSTRATE HIGHER PORT PERFORMANCE TO SATISFACTION
OF LYKES LINE MANAGEMENT (AND TO OTHER CARRIERE
AS WELL).

SERVICE TO PORT OF DAR ES SALAAM BY MAJOR US SHIPPING LINE WILL
CONTRIBUTE IMPORTANTLY TO EFFORTS BY US BUSINESSMEN TO SELL THEIR
PRODUCTS IN TANZANIAN MARKET.

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7. COMMENT: WHEN REQUESTING ADDRESSEES TO TWIST ARMS OF
US STEAMSHIP LINES TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE FOR TANZANIA,
WE RECOGNIZE THERE IS CERTAIN RISK. QUESTION CAN RIGHTLY
BE ASKED -- WILL TANGOV PROGRAM OF RECENT WEEKS TO REDUCE
CONGESTION IN DAR PORT BE SUSTAINED OR IS IT ONLY BALLOONING
OUT NOW TO BE DEFLATED AFTER FEW WEEKS? WE THINK FORMER WILL
BE CASE. AS WE OBSERVED WITH VILLAGIZATION PROGRAM (SEE DAR ES
SALAAM A-188 AND A-207) AND THE EFFORT NOW BEING MOUNTED TO

INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION (SEE DAR ES SALAAM 3800 AND A-200) THERE IS GROWING AWARENESS THAT WORDS ALONE WILL NOT ALLOW GOVERNMENT TO ACCOMPLISH GOVERNMENT POLICY GOALS OR OVERCOME BOTTLENECKS IN ECONOMY. GOVERNMENT APPEARS WILLING TO PRESCRIBE STRONG MEDICINE, AND WE ANTICIPATE IT CLOSELY WATCHING PORT CONGESTION PROBLEM UNTIL IT SHOWS SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT. WHEN MAKING THIS COMMENT WE DO NOT SEE DAR ES SALAAM BECOMING MODEL PORT WITH THREAT OF SERIOUS CONGESTION COMPLETELY ERADICATED. THERE WILL CONTINUE TO BE, AT TIMES, FRUSTRATING DELAYS, INEPT HANDLING OF CARGO, AND PORT HANDLING EQUIPMENT INOPERATIVE BECAUSE OF LACK OF PARTS AND MAINTENANCE. NEVERTHELESS, ALL SIGNS INDICATE IMPROVEMENT IS BEGINNING TO SHOW AND WE ARE DELIGHTED.
CARTER

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